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HALF-CENTURY DISCOURSE.

A

SERMON, *at*

DELIVERED IN WARWICK, MASS.

OCT. 12, 1864.

IT BEING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AUTHOR'S ORDINATION AS PASTOR OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN THAT TOWN.

BY PRESERVED SMITH,

(FOR THIRTY YEARS THE PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH AND SOCIETY.)



GREENFIELD:
PRINTED BY S. S. EASTMAN & COMPANY.

1864.

D SMITH, PRESERVED, jr.

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.8 in Warwick, Mass., Oct. 12, 1864, it being the
fiftieth anniversary of the author's ordination
as pastor of the first Congregational church and
society in that town. Greenfield, S.S. Eastman
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WARWICK, Oct. 23, 1864.

REV. P. SMITH.

DEAR SIR:—

In compliance with the expressed wishes of the members of the first Congregational Church and Society in Warwick, and of its citizens generally, we as Parish Committee respectfully solicit a copy of your anniversary sermon for publication. Aside from the importance attached to it on account of its associations, we deem it valuable for its instructions and as a record of the rise and progress of the first religious organization in this town.

Very respectfully yours,

E. MAYO,
S. W. SPOONER, } Parish
A. BLAKE. } Committee.

GREENFIELD, Oct. 28, 1864.

GENTLEMEN :—

I am happy to learn from your polite note that the discourse delivered on the Fiftieth Anniversary of my Ordination as Pastor of the first Church and Society in your town was favorably received both by you, the Parish Committee, and the friends and citizens whom you represent. Agreeable to your request a copy of the discourse is at your disposal.

Very sincerely yours, &c.,

PRESERVED SMITH.

Messrs. E. MAYO,
S. W. SPOONER, } Parish Committee.
A. BLAKE.

2540



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SERMON.

HAVING THEREFORE OBTAINED HELP OF GOD, I CONTINUE UNTO THIS DAY.
Acts, XXVI: 22.

The Apostle Paul, the author of these words, could use them with strict application to himself. He had experienced signal deliverances from the power of his enemies and persecutors through the interposition of the Divine hand. He could not fail of being most sensibly impressed that he was indebted to more than human protection in the preservation of his life, and to more than human strength in prosecuting the work that was especially assigned to him, as "an Apostle of the Gentiles." He was at this time far advanced in life, as he speaks of himself as "Paul the aged," and he had labored in his Master's cause nearly thirty years. The text so applicable to him has, as I am most solemnly reminded, a degree of application to myself. To one who has traveled life's varied journey more than three score years and ten, whose cup has been mingled with joy and sorrow, and who can recognize the finger of Providence in shaping circumstances and events beyond human control, and which have had an important bearing in directing his course, the text has a meaning. I would, therefore, say with humble gratitude, "that having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day." This DAY, on which I would lay peculiar emphasis, because it is the 50th anniversary of my ordination to the work of the gospel ministry in this place. This DAY, which a half a century ago I little expected

to see. Thus far my heavenly Father has led me and sustained me. I can see His wisdom and kindness in ordering my lot under circumstances sometimes apparently unpropitious, but which were designed for good.

Fifty years ago the 12th of October, 1814, was an interesting day, and was so regarded by the people of this town, as ordinations formerly were of more rare occurrence than now. It was an occasion in which the town participated. I was settled by a vote of the town. My salary was raised and paid by the town. I was the town minister. My settlement was supposed to be permanent, at least, during good behavior. The dismissal of a minister at that day ever excited suspicion to his discredit. The late Rev. Dr. Emons of Franklin once remarked in reference to the unfavorable effect of a dismissal on ministerial reputation, that every time it occurred it depreciated twenty-five per cent. But such events now in a minister's lot are so common and expected that they cause no surprise or comment.

The day of my ordination was a beautiful, bland autumnal day, and the occasion drew together a very large assemblage of people. The old meeting house was crowded to its utmost capacity and many stood without not being able to gain admittance. The ordaining council was composed of ministers and delegates from churches of the congregational order without regard to doctrinal test. Calvinists, Arminians and Unitarians met and acted in ministerial fellowship. All its proceedings were in fraternal spirit and fifty male members of the church* in venerable procession escorted it to the meeting-house, where the public exercises were as follows:—Introductory prayer by the Rev. Mr. Brown of Swanzey, N. H.; Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Smith of Rowe, (father of the candidate,) text 2 Cor. 12: 9; Ordaining prayer by the Rev. Mr.

NOTE.—Rev. Mr. Rogers of Bernardston was a member of the council. Rev. Mr. Harding of New Salem, whose church was represented by its delegate, was necessarily absent, officiating at that time as Chaplain of a Massachusetts regiment in the vicinity of Boston.

*Appendix A.

Kilburne of Wendell ; Charge by the Rev. Mr. Lee of Royalston ; Right hand of fellowship by the Rev. Mr. Estabrook of Athol ; Concluding prayer by the Rev. Mr. Willard of Deerfield. The singing was appropriate and by a large choir in the style of that day, closing with an anthem.

It has been said that "a man has the worst theme in the world when the subject is himself." I hope, therefore, to receive the candor of the audience as so much in this discourse will necessarily be uttered in the first person.

In the early part of my ministry there were many members of this church and society, who were the original settlers of this town. Though far advanced in life, yet they were men of manly form and aspect, and showed full well how they were able in more vigorous years to grapple with the hardships and meet the privations necessarily to be endured and experienced in converting a wilderness into fruitful fields. Often have I listened to interesting narratives of what they passed through in providing for their families and to enjoy religious privileges. An elderly lady related how in the days of her first two children, her husband carried the youngest and she led the other as they walked two miles to church. Such were the men and women who planted and early sustained the institutions of religion in this town, and in doing it they made great sacrifices and surmounted great difficulties. They were of genuine puritan stamp. Here, as usually in the early settlements of New England, the meeting-house and the school-house rose side by side, and these have made her the head and heart of our country's growth and prosperity.

The first Congregational Church was organized in Dec., 1760. The Rev. Lemuel Hedge, the first minister, was ordained at the same time. Mr. Samuel Leonard, who lived to an advanced age, informed me that he was present at the occasion, being then 19 years of age. It would be interesting to know something of the transactions and services of that day so full of hope, but no record of them has been preserved except the Church covenant then adopted and the names of those

who originally signed it.* That covenant with some abridgement has been the platform of this Church to the present time. Its main point is the sufficiency of the scriptures as a rule of faith and a holy living and a guide unto salvation.

Mr. Hedge was a man of intellectual, moral and christian worth. I often heard those who sat under his ministry, speak of him with great veneration and respect. He was born in Hardwick and graduated at Harvard University in 1759. This town was then unincorporated and was called "Roxbury Canada," from the circumstance of its being a grant of land to the widows and children of the soldiers from Roxbury, who served in an expedition in Canada in 1690. The proprietors of the township, who resided in Roxbury, to encourage settlers, erected a saw-mill, a grist-mill and a meeting-house, and to aid in the settlement of a minister, they appropriated one-hundred acres of land to him in its center. On this he built a house, which is now standing, enclosed a park for deer, and on a small stream in the south part of the tract, he erected a saw-mill† which by way of exercise he often took charge of himself. He was of an athletic frame and of great energy of character, of a benevolent disposition and unaffected piety, of liberal views‡ in theology, an earnest preacher, and much endeared to his people, ready to bear with them the burdens to be sustained in a primitive settlement, often wending his way from house to house by marked trees in making parochial visits. His ministry was highly blessed in training up a church going people.

About that time a change was going on in the New England congregations as to the mode of conducting the singing. To effect which in many instances was attended with great difficulty, being deemed an alarming innovation. Mr. H. had his trial in a movement so delicate to manage, but by a prudent course, he accomplished what the more enlightened part of the community desired. A sermon of his, delivered at the

*Appendix B.

†Appendix C.

‡Appendix D.

close of a singing-school, treating of the advantages of such a change, was published. The previous mode of conducting this service was not by the choir, but by the congregation led off by one of the deacons, who read the hymn line by line. The people were tenacious of a usage that had descended to them by puritan example, and the deacons were more so, as it took from them a function which they deemed as especially belonging to them, and might in consequence lessen their official importance.

At the commencement of the American revolution, he was suspected by some, who were ultra liberty men, and violent and rash in their measures, as leaning to the Tory side of the controversy that then agitated the country. The sacredness of his office did not shield him from persecution and insult. They not only depredated his property by destroying his park, but outraged his person, taking him from his bed and tying him behind one of his captors on horse-back to be taken to a neighboring town for trial.* But as soon this outrage was known a company of his friends pursued after and rescued him. Such unmerited and brutal treatment so wounded his refined and sensitive nature that it preyed on his health, and no doubt, tended to accelerate the disease with which he was soon after seized, and which terminated his useful life, which occurred Oct. 1777, in the 47th year of his age and the 17th of his ministry.†

His friends did not doubt his patriotism, though he was probably in favor of moderate measures, and saw with many others the fearful odds with which the colonies were to contend. He wrote a letter‡ to his friend and class-mate, Gen. Warren, which was found in the pocket of the latter after his fall at the battle of Bunker Hill, and in which he professed a sincere interest in the liberty of his country, yet expressed

*Appendix E.

†The sermon at his funeral was preached by the Rev. Bunker Gay of Hinsdale, N. H. It was printed and freely breathed the spirit of that period.

‡Appendix F.

fears as to the issue of the struggle. Had he survived the revolution and been permitted to see the dawn, then so overcast, to brighten into day, he would undoubtedly have been among the firm friends of American independence.

His death was felt to be a great loss to his people, for he had been to them a father, counselor and friend. They had shared his tender and fraternal sympathy under their hardships, privations and trials, and the religious society, that he had led by the hand in its infancy, seemed to require his fostering care to give it further maturity and growth. But God, who does not forsake his people, did not forget this little flock. The good seed planted by this faithful Pastor was productive of a far-reaching influence even unto this day.

In this connection it seems fit to make some notice of Dr. Medad Pomroy, who was a cotemporary with Mr. Hedge, a near neighbor and intimate friend. As one was the minister, the other was the physician of the town. He was a native of Northampton and a graduate of Yale College in 1759. They having received similar literary culture, it is to be supposed that there would be a similarity in their tastes and sympathies and that they would as naturally as the law of attraction, seek and enjoy each others society. He gave me many interesting reminiscences of his beloved minister and of those early times, truly "days of small things," when both united their efforts to advance the religious and material interests of the new town. Every new acquisition to the population was to them a mutual gratification. Often when he was attending on patients, whose means of comfort were scanty, Mr. Hedge would fill his saddle-bags with such necessities as might be timely and acceptable.

He was quite a theologian and had clear and decided views on religious subjects. His sympathies were very tender for the afflicted, and on funeral occasions he was expected to have a seat in the room with the mourners, not unfrequently mingling with his tears words of christian consolation. In him the social element was very prominent and his house was distin-

guished for a generous hospitality.* His kind feelings to all endeared to him a large circle of friends. Near the close of his protracted life he expressed great gratitude for the many blessings that had distinguished it and a cheerful resignation to the will of Heaven, sustained by a christian faith. He died in Oct., 1819, five years after my settlement, at the advanced age of 83.

The successor of Mr. Hedge was the Rev. Samuel Reed, who was a native of Massachusetts and a graduate of Yale College in 1777. He was ordained in 1779, when the country was in the midst of the revolution, and this town, like others of earnest patriotism, was bearing its part of the burden of the contest. The people under such circumstances could not give a minister a very liberal support in a pecuniary sense, but they gave what is invaluable to him, their united affection, a uniform and candid attendance on his ministrations. Being my immediate predecessor, I learned much of him from living lips as being an interesting man, a forcible preacher and a faithful Pastor. There is evidence of this from the fact that this was regarded as one of the largest congregations in this region and the church consisted of about 150 members. He was a man of more than common talents, which, had he enjoyed larger means for their cultivation, would have given him a high rank in his profession. He was better read in men than in books. He had a kind of intuitive insight into character, which enabled him to adapt himself with wisdom and prudence to all classes. He possessed unusual conversational powers and his keen and innocent humor rendered his society attractive. He was a great foe to superstition and could readily detect the delusions, to which religious fanatics are prone. Some things of this kind severely tried his patience.†

His preaching was more practical than doctrinal, and he did not often introduce subjects of controversy. His sentiments were of the Arminian type. The discussion of certain doc-

*Appendix G.

†Appendix H.

trinal points, which now divide the congregational churches in New England had not then commenced. Had he lived in later times, he would have undoubtedly taken his stand on liberal ground. This I infer from what I have learned from those acquainted with him, who must have understood the general tone of his religious views from his usual style of preaching. He died in 1812, after a ministry of about 33 years, which upon the whole was peaceful, yet, probably, not entirely exempt from trials. He was much lamented by an affectionate people, who, in token of their regard, erected a monument, with an appropriate inscription, over his grave.

Several of his grand-children are now living in town, and are the worthy members of this religious society.

It was no small privilege to enter upon a field that had been favored with the labors of two so eminent Pastors as those who preceded me, and whose characters and ministry I have attempted to describe. A field all ready and waiting to receive the good seed of gospel instruction. There was no work required to build up a society as is often the arduous labor of a minister at the present day, as that was already done. My work and care was to feed and watch the flock that was gathered in the fold. I entered upon this sacred relation with much misgiving owing to my inexperience in my profession, but I soon found myself among a people of christian candor who came to meeting not to criticise, but to be guided in duty, yet not deficient in discrimination in regard to gospel doctrine and requirements. That was a golden period in New England parishes. It was a pleasure and satisfaction to minister to such a people. Many a good man and woman were to me, what Aaron and Herr were to Moses, to sustain me under my labors and responsible charge. There was a satisfaction in breaking bread to a large church and in receiving frequent additions to it, a satisfaction that none but a minister can truly know. I shall never forget these excellent parishoners, who aided my settlement and gave me their faithful friendship. Their venerable forms, as they filled the old meeting-house, are still in my

mind's eye. I shall ever cherish their memory with pleasure. I shall ever remember how cordially they used to receive me to their houses and how unreservedly I was accustomed to open my heart to them on subjects connected with our common interest as Pastor and people. I can never forget the pleasant interviews in the social circle. How I often rejoiced with them in their joys and as readily sympathized with them in their sorrows. I can recall many scenes of sickness, death and affliction, which, at the time, were too painful for utterance.* My own cup, too, more than once was mingled with bitterness. I was a "companion with them in tribulation," and in those seasons, when my dwelling was shrouded in sackcloth, I shared the kind and substantial expressions of their sympathy.

That generation†, of whom I have just been speaking, nearly all passed away during my thirty years' ministry‡. It might in truth be said that I buried one congregation. A great portion of the original church had been translated to that above. Those, who were children at my settlement, had become heads of families and were occupying places of influence and responsibility. In several instances, I joined those in marriage, whose parents, a quarter of a century before, I had united in the same solemn relation. Such changes often deeply affect the connection between a minister and people. The new generation and the new comers do not always feel the attachment that the fathers manifested. It ought not to cause any complaint. It is according to human events and human destiny. Old things pass away and there is a preference for the new. And this, probably had some influence in dissolving the connection between me and this society. I do not allude to it with any but the kindest feelings. Perhaps it was for the best in regard to both parties that a separation should take place. That the *one* should have the benefit of new men and new measures, and that the *other* should be removed to a fresh field of usefulness.§ But I am free to say that it caused a

*Appendix I. †Appendix K. ‡It closed Oct., 1844. §Appendix L.

painful struggle to break off a connection that had been of so long continuance, as it was here among a people of my first love that I had devoted the best and most vigorous part of my life. The young seemed to me like children. I had been connected with them in the various stages of their education* both in the Sunday and district schools. The church, too, was composed mostly of those that had been admitted under my ministry. There was also kindred dust reposing in yonder cemetery that served to bind my heart to this place. It could not be that a separation under all these circumstances should occur with a stoic insensibility on my part, but that it should excite the most tender emotions.

“There is a divinity that shapes our ends,
“Rough hew them how we will.”

“A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.”

The relation between a minister and people, when entered into and cemented by pure motives, is very intimate and tender, the most so of any that is formed in this life, the matrimonial excepted. Resting on a spiritual basis, it is far different from those connections in commercial intercourse, which rest on pecuniary considerations and which continue no longer than those considerations bear sway. If this union is more a matter of dollars and cents than of the affections, it is brittle and easily dissolved. To this source may be traced the frequent dissolutions of this kind in latter years. But when this connection is such as we apprehend it was designed to be, by the great Head of the church, the minister feels a warm interest in the edification and general welfare of his flock and they regard him as their spiritual guide, friend and comforter. He enters heartily into all their joys and sorrows and they freely unbosom to him their feelings and wants in reference to their peculiar trials, or doubts, or hindrances in a christian course. He aims to meet all their reasonable demands on his time and services, “both in season and out of season” and they suitably

*Appendix M.

appreciate his devotion to their highest good and show a readiness to co-operate with him in every christian work. Happy the people that are favored with such a Pastor, and happy the minister that labors among such a people. Their mutual efforts, sacrifices, prayers and sympathies all sweetly commingle as an acceptable offering to heaven. With a minister and people in such a case the work of the gospel cannot fail to prosper, "for there the Lord commandeth his blessing."

It will not be deemed inappropriate to this occasion, I trust, to introduce some statistics relating to my connection with this society. During my thirty years' ministry there were 544 deaths in town, and at a greater part of whose funerals I officiated. Of this number 270 occurred in families that were constant worshipers in this society, and 115 of these were members of this church. Of the number of deaths in town, 65 were over 80 years of age, and 16 over 90. This shows the longevity to which the fathers attained. Of the consumption, there were 106. This during that period was a marked disease, and in one year (1827) there were 9 as its victims and nearly all in the bloom of life. I solemnized the rite of marriage in 206 instances and of these 26 were in other towns. There were 174 admitted to the church, a large majority of whom by profession and the residue by letters from other churches. In the early period of this church there was introduced what was called "the half-way covenant," which was formerly extensively adopted in the New Churches. According to the provisions of this anomaly in religion, those, who desired, might offer their children in baptism, without coming to the communion. This implied that those, who entered into this relation, had faith enough to accept the privilege of the former ordinance, but not enough to enjoy the benefit of the latter.

Under my ministry 338 received the ordinance of baptism; and I refer to this subject with no ordinary satisfaction that so many, both adults and children, were admitted to this beautiful and significant rite—adults by christian profession and children

of such, and of such only. It was no uncommon occurrence that whole families were presented in the congregation by their parents—the place most proper for receiving the rite except under some peculiar circumstance. It is truly appropriate that parents should, in this appointed way, dedicate the precious objects of their affections to Him, to whom “children are a heritage.” It is meet that in the solemn assembly the tender lambs of the flock should receive the gospel mark, to signify that they belong to the christian fold. But latterly this much neglected rite, whenever observed, is usually in private, as if it was thought vulgar or unfashionable to bring such dear objects of angelic beauty and purity into the house of God.

As far as I can ascertain there are only six men and that number of women now living in town, who were members of this society at the time of my settlement and four of the above number, two males and two females are the only survivors of those who then constituted the church*. “The fashion of this world passeth away.” When thus we contemplate what a half a century has wrought in removing one after another from the ranks of the living, the question of the prophet comes forcibly home to every heart, “Your fathers where are they?” Echo replies, “where are they?” This would be the only answer, were it not for the Gospel of Jesus Christ that “hath brought life and immortality to light.”

During the existence of this church to the present time fourteen persons have filled the honorable office of deacon†—six of these officiated during my Pastorate, and they “used the office well.” The importance of this office as regards the welfare of the church may be inferred from the fact that at its institution it was especially directed that “men of prudence and of good report” should be selected to fill it. And the annals of Protestant churches will show that those in distinguished positions have readily served in that capacity that they might

*Appendix N.

†Appendix O.

the better serve the interests of religion. It being of Apostolic appointment, it is nearly or quite coëval with that of the christian ministry and they are evidently designed to be associated. One to have in charge the spiritual, and the other the temporal or financial interests of the church.

As early as 1818 the Sunday school was organized, and Watts' catechism was the first used, and subsequently some others, but after two or three years, it was suspended, not receiving a cordial support, being viewed by many a sectarian innovation. It was resumed in 1827 and became a popular institution, and in connection with the bible class and library, has been an important auxiliary to this religious society. I was very much strengthened in this good work by the aid of a worthy superintendent, (the late J. Blake, Esq.,) and a devoted band of teachers. This institution when based on the Scriptures as a text-book, may be regarded as the nursery of the church and its value has been so thoroughly tested that no religious society now would be willing to dispense with it. A retrospect of my labor in this department of Pastoral duty is very gratifying and I hope that therefrom there may have been planted some good seed that will yield fruit unto eternal life.

It will undoubtedly be expected that some allusion be made to the formation of the second society in this town, it being a secession from this. I would only say that I regretted to part with those, whom I esteemed as valuable parishioners and friends. Yet, if they could be better edified under a different ministry there could be no objection to their course, though it might at the time, be at the expense of some unpleasant feelings. It is not to be expected that in this world, "seeing as we do through a glass darkly," our views on all points of christian doctrine will perfectly harmonize. In accounting for this some allowance is to be made for difference of culture, to education and training under unlike means and influences and to constitutional tendencies. All that can be reasonably required, is, to grant to others the freedom of enquiry and mode

of worship that we claim for ourselves. It is well to bear in mind that however great a divergence there may be in human speculations on certain matters of "doubtful disputation," there is notwithstanding but one true church and "one communion of saints." It is a broad church embracing all "who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." It is a sweet communion, its essence being brotherly kindness and charity.

The Apostle observes that "the world lieth in wickedness." This sad truth is known and felt in all its force, even at this distance of time. War, slavery, intemperance, sensuality and all kinds of fraud, injustice and oppression are the fruits of sin. It is the purpose of the gospel to procure a redemption from these evils which spread so much desolation and woe. It is termed "the word of reconciliation." This significantly points out what should be the prime object of the christian ministry, to battle against every form of vice and immorality, to bring mankind by its persuasive power into harmony with the divine perfections and the spirit of heaven, and to establish the reign of righteousness, peace and charity. "Repentance towards God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ," and a future retribution are ever to be urged as seasonable and of supreme importance as preparatory "to walking in newness of life." We ought not to loose sight of these central doctrines of the gospel, concerning which there is a general agreement and which are essential in the formation and growth of the christian character. Much stress is also to be laid on personal religion as the source of inward peace and joy, and as an attainment to this there is the assurance that every sincere effort in this direction will be attended with the divine blessing. "God worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure" when we are devoted to the interests of the soul.

In reviewing my sermons, I do not perceive that my views on the above and kindred points have experienced any material change, yet increasing inquiry may have modified my sentiments on matters not so essential, and may also have imparted new light on some parts of scripture. A man must have a

fossilized mind not to experience any change in his opinions on many subjects of religious interest during half a century, and especially during a half century in a period of the world's history so distinguished for progress and information. It is not to be supposed that all the truth embodied in the scriptures has yet been fully apprehended. "God," as the pious John Robinson assured the parting pilgrims, "has more truth to break forth from His holy word." It is the sincere inquirer, in his researches in that inexhaustible treasure, that may hope to make new discoveries.

A ministry to be affective must not ignore the sure foundation, which is Christ. We cannot have a christianity of vital power if it be lacking in this element. The apostles made him the corner-stone, on which those churches early planted were to rest, and there must be the same germ in every church and society now to give a spiritual growth and prosperity. Their discourses as recorded in the Acts, their epistles, and especially the teachings of Christ, all are replete with that heavenly knowledge, "which maketh wise unto salvation." Why forsake the fountain of living water and repair to broken cisterns? In substituting human wisdom for the divine, and regarding the intuitions of the soul as imparting a light on a par, if not paramount to that of revelation, we are attempting to draw spiritual nourishment from a fallible source. The light within would be dim indeed were it not aided by the reflection of that from above. Should we deem the light of a star sufficient to guide our steps when we could have that of the sun? Should we not in that case, prefer the greater to the lesser light? Christ is the moral luminary to enlighten the world, and all other lights are but feeble tapers in comparison to Him. "*In Him* we have the light of life."

In 1836 I prepared and delivered a series of sermons on theology, aiming at a systematic treatise of such doctrinal and practical subjects as are supposed to be taught in the gospel. From the listening-attention they received, I was led to believe that they were acceptable. However that may have been,

they were a benefit to myself, as they required a course of investigation, which served as a good mental discipline, and brought me to a more thorough acquaintance with those portions of scripture, which define the articles of our faith and the rules of christian duty. The carrying out this plan of sermonizing required no small degree of application, but it was attended with a satisfaction rarely exceeded in the course of my professional studies. From this brief experience, I am inclined to the opinion that the efforts of the pulpit would be followed with greater results if more system were observed in the selection of subjects. There is a system in nature, and why should there not be in the treatment of all important doctrines and duties.

“All are but parts of one stupendous whole.”

We speak of the system of Astronomy, of Anatomy, of Geology and of Botany, and are not doctrinal, moral and religious subjects worthy to be treated in a systematic order? By giving each its prominent place and connection there is more readily discerned the harmonious whole. Christianity when thus presented will exhibit a beauty and symmetry, harmonizing with nature, that will more effectually commend it to the understanding and conscience.

In looking back fifty years we are filled with amazement at the great stride that has been made within that time in the application of science to the various departments of civilized life. When we contrast the present with the state of things *then*, we can hardly believe that it is the same world. Perhaps within no fifty years since the christian era have the inventive powers of man been so active, and been crowned with so great results. It is certainly a great privilege to have lived in such an age. Dr. Franklin, who did much for the advancement of science, often observed, “how he should like to revisit the earth a hundred years after his death, in order to see what improvements and discoveries had been made in his absence.” And in a letter to Dr. Priestley he says, “the rapid progress true science now makes oc-

casions my regretting sometimes that I was born so soon. It is impossible to imagine the height to which may be carried, in a thousand years, the power of man over matter." Had he lived at the present time his highest flight of imagination in this direction would have been realized.

The inquiry is often made whether it be possible during the next 50 years that the march of mind and discovery will be as great? We perceive no reason why it should not. There is much yet in the hidden and mysterious laws of nature that "philosophy has not dreamed of." The present attainments in mind and achievements over matter, the boast of the present age, may be only stepping stones to future and greater progress. God in His providence seems to have raised up and endowed men from age to age with peculiar penetrative and inventive powers to be the essential instruments in the world's advancement. And not least in the progress of this auspicious period is the extension of christianity and its practical application in the removal or mitigation of much physical privation and suffering. On many of the heathen nations it has lifted its benignant smiles through the agency of missionaries and the scriptures, and in christian lands it has given birth to various philanthropic institutions, which are daily scattering their blessings. Surely great responsibility rests on those living in such distinguished times to give an impulse to every good object and to make such advantages subservient to the moral and religious elevation of the race.

The greatest draw-back to the present period, otherwise so highly favored, is this fratricidal war, which has, and is filling our land with suffering and tears; yet this terrible scourge of the nation may be over-ruled for good. "The Lord seeth not as man seeth." It may have been necessary that this nation should be purified of its great sin of slavery, "the sum of all villainies," as by fire. And other national sins, no doubt, demand such a retribution as is now grievously experienced. This war in God's hand may be working out for the people a regenerating life. Future generations may speak of it, as we

do of that of the Revolution, as having been an unspeakable blessing in purchasing universal freedom and equal rights. But on the present generation it has laid a heavy hand. The good that is hoped to be received from it is bought with a price. It can be safely said that in no age or country has more devoted patriotism been exhibited, or greater sacrifices* been made, or heavier burdens more cheerfully borne in order to preserve a national existence. And in sustaining these heavy burdens the females of our country are entitled to a large share of the credit and praise. They have done and are doing what lies in their power to save the nation. In how many instances has the mother resigned her son that was to be to her the staff of her declining years, and the wife her husband, on whom she leaned for protection, and the betrothed maiden called to weep over the blighting of fondly cherished prospects. Their untiring labors in furnishing comforts for the army has contributed to give great support to our cause, as sympathy and aid from such a source cannot fail to nerve many an arm in battle and mitigate much of the suffering in the hospital. Their good deeds will not fail to be recorded in our country's history.

It gives me pleasure to find that this society is in a prosperous condition, steadfast in maintaining the faith and order of the gospel. I could hope that some fruit of my ministry is yet visible. It is exceeding gratifying to me that so many, nurtured under it, are occupying respectable and useful positions both in this town, and in other and distant places,† a most gratifying comment on my past Pastoral labors. I shall ever regard them with parental interest, and I am happy to say that whenever I meet them in the varied walks of life, they ever show me a filial respect.

Be assured, my friends, that I have never forgotten the people of my early attachment. It is my fervent desire that you may be blessed and happy in your domestic relations and prosperous and united as a people. May the vine planted by your

*Appendix P.

†Appendix Q.

fathers receive your fostering care. May you give your minister occasion to feel that his labors receive your co-operation to give them a desired success. Refuse not to provide oil for the lamp that gives you light. Let him have substantial evidence that he shares your affections and sympathies. Be faithful to the great Head of the church by arranging yourselves under his banner, and you will share his promise to his disciples that "he will be with them to the end of the world."

This society has entered upon the second century of its existence. Several generations have come and passed away since its formation. May you suitably appreciate the inheritance bequeathed to you by a pious and worthy ancestry. "The glory of children are their fathers." It is an honor and a privilege to be able to trace one's lineage to such a source. May you continue to be distinguished for your interests in the education of your youth.* Whatever may be the measure of your material prosperity, you may be assured that the rearing a generation of well educated young men and women is to be regarded as among your most valued interests. A people distinguished for intelligence, morality and religion gives a higher character to a town than anything that can be said of the fertility and production of its soil.

During my twenty years' absence the resistless march of time has made a change in this society that I can readily perceive. Many of its present worshipers are strangers to me, yet this does not abate my interest in its prosperity. It gives me pleasure that I can greet so many familiar faces. It becomes me to thank you for your kindness in inviting me to unite with you on this occasion† so suggestive of tender remembrances. May it be blessed to our mutual benefit. Having obtained help of God our lives have been thus prolonged and crowned with many signal blessings, which demand unceasing gratitude. Many with whom we have been associated in earlier and later years have, like autumn leaves, fallen on our

*Appendix K.

†Appendix S.

right hand and on our left, and caused a painful void in many a bosom. The dissolution of earthly ties should aid us in our preparations for that life, which has no end. May we all live under a solemn sense of our responsibility and with an earnest devotion to duty that "the spirit itself may bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." We are approaching a period when all earthly distinctions will be forgotten, and where the least christian services will be remembered,—when both ministers and people, who have been faithful unto the end, "shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

Be pleased, my friends, in conclusion, to accept my parting benediction in the appropriate words of the Apostle—"Finally, brethren, farewell: Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

APPENDIX.

A.—Names of those members of the church, who, in procession, escorted the Council to the meeting-house.

Isaiah Bangs,	Jonas Conant,	Josiah Proctor,
Zachariah Barber,	Nathan Hastings,	Medad Pomroy, M. D.,
Abram Barnes,	Jonas Leonard,	Josiah Pomroy,
Samuel Barnes,	Francis Leonard,	Josiah Pomroy, Jr.,
Jonathan Blake,	Francis Leonard, 2d,	Josiah Smith,
James Blake,	Jonas Leonard, Jr.,	Wilder Stevens,
Jonathan Blake, Jr.	Nathan Leonard,	Nathaniel G. Stevens,
Obadiah Bass, sen.,	Perley Leland,	Nathaniel G. Stevens, Jr.,
William Burnett,	Thomas Mallard,	Ebenezer Stearns,
William Burnett, Jr.,	Caleb Mayo,	Ebenezer Stearns, jr.,
Samuel Bowman,	Samuel Mayo,	Benjamin Tewell,
James Ball,	Mark Moor,	Asa Thayer,
John Ball,	Jonathan Moor, Jr.,	Daniel Whitney,
Samuel Ball,	Jonathan Moor,	John Whitney,
Benjamin Conant,	Nathan C. Morse,	Joseph Williams,
Asa Conant,	Ebenezer Pierce,	Joseph Williams, Jr.
Benjamin Conant, Jr.,	Peter Proctor,	

B.—The names of those who signed the church covenant at the time of its adoption in Dec. 1760:—Lemuel Hedge, David Ayers, Ebenezer Davis, Ephraim Perry, Ebenezer Prescott, David Barnett, John Farrar, Asa Robbins, Charles Woods, deacon, James Ball, Jeduthan Morse, Amzi Doolittle, Silas Town, deacon. It is presumed that the wives of the persons, whose names are here given as the signers of the church covenant, were also included as the original members of this church.

C.—The late Prof. Hedge of Cambridge, son of the Rev. Mr. Hedge, informed me that he remembered, when a lad, of going with his father to tend the saw-mill and that his father with much muscular vigor could wield its labors. On a visit to his native town a few years since, he went to the ground once occupied by the old saw-mill, and found a part of the water-wheel, from which he took a piece and carried home as a choice relic.

D.—This was the opinion of his son, the late Prof. Hedge of Cambridge, from whom I received the impression and on whose authority I was led to make the above statement.

E.—Capt. Peter Proctor, who gave me an account of this outrage on the person of Mr. Hedge, was one, and probably the leader, of the party, who, on the alarm being given, immediately pursued after and rescued him from his captors as they were taking him to Northfield for trial.

F.—The fact of this letter from Mr. Hedge to Gen. Warren, I received from Lieut. Josiah Pomroy, an ardent and tried patriot of the Revolution, and he regarded it as on good authority.

G.—The following lines Dr. Pomroy used to repeat to his friends as the expression of his hospitable heart:—

“To my best, my friends are free,—
Free with that and free with me,
Free to pass the timely joke,
And the tube sedately smoke:
Free to act and free to think,
(No informers with me drink)—
Free to stay a night or so,
And when uneasy free to go.”

H.—In the early part of Mr. Reed's ministry there were several persons of both sexes, some of whom, I believe, were members of his church and congregation, who became new-lights, and adopted what in modern times is called the “free-love doctrine.” They had reached so great perfection, in their own estimation, that they were deluded with the idea that it was lawful to have spiritual husbands and wives, which of course led to the exchange of partners. If their religion began in the spirit, it ended in the flesh, and resulted in breaking up and ruining several families, who scattered and left the town for distant parts.

I.—In 1831 Warwick was visited by a dysentery of a very malignant type, which swept off, in about seven weeks, 16 persons old and young. In the families of John Whitney, jr., and John Bowman there was distressing mortality, four dying out of each, within a few days. A sister and child of Mr. B. were buried at one time, and the next week Mr. B. and another child were buried at the same time.

K.—I feel that some particular and honorable mention of the generation here alluded to should be made. There was the sainted Barnes, whose walk was with God. J. Blake, sen. was truly in dress and manners, a gentleman of the old school. C. Mayo, Esq., noted for his straight forward uprightness and integrity. Capt. P. Proctor, the unflinching patriot. Capt. M. Moor, the substantial friend of good order; and there were others, too numerous to individualize, worthy citizens and of exemplary lives. And women not a few who were mothers in Israel, full of good works and ministrations of mercy and kindness.

L.—A few months after my dismissal I was invited to Pembroke, where I had a pleasant ministry of four years, and was obliged to resign on account of ill-health.

M.—Before the present law in this state, which provides a committee to take charge of the district schools, that labor and responsibility devolved on the town minister. For many years I performed this service and it was no small tax on my time and strength in examining the teachers and doing the visiting of eleven schools. But it was a field of extensive usefulness.

N.—The following are the persons, heads of families, here alluded to: Benjamin Conant and wife, Nat. G. Stevens and wife, David Ball, Joseph Wilson, Eben. Barber, Nathan C. Morse, widow T. Leonard, widow E. Stearns, widow J. Moor, and widow A. Barber. Of those members of the church at my settlement only the following survive: Benj. Conant and wife, Nathaniel G. Stevens and widow E. Stearns; Nathan C. Morse and widow F. Leonard succeeded to the other church.

O.—The names of those who officiated as deacons during the existence of the church to the present time: Charles Woods, Silas Town, James Ball, Benjamin Conant, Caleb Mayo, Eben. Pierce, Samuel Ball, Eben. Stearns, Josiah Proctor, James Blake, Hervey Barber, Joseph Wilson, Danford Tyler, and Edward Mayo.

P.—In no town of like population and means have there been nobler exertions and greater sacrifices in meeting the requirements for suppressing this unholy rebellion than in Warwick. Every quota has been promptly filled, and many of her patriotic sons have fallen in battle, or breathed out their

devoted lives in the hospital, as precious offerings on the altar of their country.
Dulce est pro patria mori.

Q.—For several years in the early part of my ministry I gave instruction in the Languages and English branches, but finding it pressing too closely on my other duties, I relinquished it. The following persons I aided wholly or in part in their preparation for College: J. Goldsbury, S. L. Pomroy, J. F. Griswold, N. Gould, N. Ball, C. C. Wheaton, F. Smith and A. D. Mayo.

R.—In the winter of 1840, there were twelve young men and several young ladies, natives of the town, employed as school-teachers in town and in other places.

S.—The fitting preparation for and cordial reception tendered to me on the occasion here alluded to were all that could be desired. I shall carry its pleasant recollections to the latest period of my life.

ORDER OF EXERCISES

AT THE

SEMI-CENTENIAL CELEBRATION,

AT WARWICK, MASS., OCT. 12, 1864.

- 1.—Voluntary, by the Choir.
- 2.—Reading of Scriptures, by Rev. J. Goldsbury of Warwick.
- 3.—Hymn of Welcome—Original, by Miss M. A. Reed.

Friend and Pastor! Thou who ever
Helped to tune our lips to praise,
We, with willing hearts and voices,
Greet thee with glad welcome lays.
Here thy church, our place of worship,
Here the people of thy care;
Welcome! welcome! faithful pastor,
Lead again our praise and prayer.

Fifty years, with all their changes,
Deep inwrought on Time's bright scroll,
Here, to-day, on Memory's tablet,
Gently, backward, seem to roll.
Once again, we seem to see thee,
As by Christ-like faith sustained,
In thy manhood's strength and vigor,
To thy like's great work ordained.

Girded with the Christian's armor,
Thy great mission just begun,
Through long years of patient labor
Still we see thee pressing on:
Guiding erring feet from danger,
Telling weary ones of rest;
Leading onward, pointing upward,
To the haven of the blest.

Fifty years! where are the faces
 That were wont to greet us! where?
 Where the voices wont to mingle,
 In our praise, and in our prayer?
 They, like autumn leaves, are scattered,
 Some afar, on Life's broad sea,
 Some, in foremost ranks of battle,
 Some, at home, oh God! with Thee.

Fifty years, dear, christian pastor,
 One by one, swift circling round,
 Have thy life with bright-hued glories
 Of Life's autumn, richly crowned.
 Soon, thy weary steps will linger,
 Close beside our Father's door,
 Then thou'lt hear a GLORIOUS WELCOME
 On that happy, Heavenly shore.

4.—Prayer, by Rev. J. F. Moors of Greenfield.

5.—Hymn, from Greenwood's collection, read by Rev. S. Barber.

6.—Sermon.

7.—Prayer, by Rev. A. Harding of New Salem.

8.—Farewell Hymn—Original, by Miss M. A. Reed.

Thy mission well fulfilled,
 True servant of the Lord;
 Thy "good seed sown on fruitful soil,"
 Shall bring thee rich reward.

O, Holy Father, hear
 Our hearts' united prayer:
 May our loved pastor, here on earth,
 Thy richest blessings share.

O, Holy Father, grant,
 When from his loved employ
 Thou call'st him home, he may find rest
 In realms of holy joy.

So, when this life is o'er,
 And all his labors cease,
 Unclose thy pearly gates, and grant
 Him joy, and rest and peace.

Dear pastor, fare-thee-well!
 May we, a christian band,
 All join in holy praise with thee,
 In Heaven, at God's right hand.

9.—Benediction, by Rev. I. S. Lincoln, the present Pastor.

After the services in the church there was a collation in the vestry at which there were remarks by both Clergymen and laymen, closing with Dismission Hymn.

The church was very tastefully decorated with flowers and emblems appropriate to the occasion.

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N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA

